

Sva-niyama-dvadasakam

12 Verses Of My Own Self-imposed Regulative Principles

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

1st Verse

(The objects of devotion birth after birth)

gurau sri-gaurange tad-udita-subhakti-prakarane

saci-sunor-lila-vikasita-sutirtha nija manau

harer namni presthe hari-tithisu rupanuga-jane

suka-prokte sastre prati-jani mamastam khalu ratih

No matter whenever and wherever I happen to take birth, let my loving affection and attachment remain anshaken throughout each and every lifetime for the following things:

- for my divine spiritual master,
- for Sri Gauranga,
- for the detailed topics of pure devotional service (and the methods of its execution) as personally instructed by Him,
- for the holy places of pilgrimage such as Sri Navadvipa, Sri Ksetra, Sri Vrndavana, etc. , which are all blooming with divine sanctity due to His performance of wonderful pastimes therein,
- for the diksa mantra bestowed upon me by the divine grace of my spiritual master,
- for the holy name of Sri Hari,

- for the most beloved eternal associates of the Lord,
- for the sacred days of celebration throughout the year such as Sri Ekadasi, Sri Janmastami, Sri Radhastami, and the appearance/disappearance days of the great Vaisnava acaryas etc. ,
- for the Lord's dearmost devotees who strictly follow in the sacred footsteps of Srila Rupa Gosvami,
- and for the holy scriptures narrated by Srila Sukadeva Gosvami such as the Srimad Bhagavatam, etc.

2nd Verse

(THE INTERNAL IDENTITY OF LORD CAITANYA, THE ETERNAL GUIDE)

sada vrndaranye madhura-rasa-dhanye rasa-mayah

param saktim radham parama-rasa-murtim ramayati

sa caivayam krsno nija-bhajana-mudram upadisan

saci-sunur gaude prati-jani mamastam prabhu-varah

The Supreme Lord Sri Krsna is the personified abode of all divinely ecstatic mellow-tastes. And Sri Radhika is the topmost abode of all His divinely potent energies. Indeed, She is the personified form of the highest mellow of love in separation. Within the forest of Vrnda, which is gloriously rich in the all-pervading treasure of the sweetest madhura-rasa, this Lord Sri Krsna is continuously enjoying as He makes Sri Radhika happy by His loving service rendered to Her 24 hours a day. This very same Lord Krsna is exactly identical to the Son of mother Saci Who eternally lives simultaneously yet separately in Gauda- desa as the Instructor of the process for rendering His own service. May this Saci- nanadana become my Supreme Master and Guide, and may He always appear to me just to lead me on the proper devotional path birth after birth after birth.

3rd Verse

(REJECTION OF THINGS UNFAVORABLE FOR SRI RADHA-KRSNA'S
ETERNAL SERVICE)

na vairagyam grayham bhavati na hi yad bhakti-janitam

tatha jnanam bhanam citi yadi visesam na manute

sprha me nastange hari-bhajana-saukhyam na hi yatas

tato radha-krsna-pracura-paricarya bhavatu me

Let no form of so-called renunciation or asceticism become fit for my acceptance if it does not give rise to the continual expansion of my eternal serving mood of loving devotion. And let no form of so-called knowledge or intellectual cultivation appeal to me at all if it does not admit the reality of eternal individuality shared by the Lord and His devotees during their everlasting daily pastimes. I have no desire at all for practicing any branch of the eight-fold yoga process, for none of them contain any scope for enjoying the daily pleasure of serving Lord Hari such as His confidential worship does. Rather, may I render profuse, uninterrupted confidential service 24 hours a day to Sri Sri Radha-Krsna for all of time to come (such service being the means as well as the end) .

4th Verse

(WHERE TO LIVE, AND WHERE NOT TO LIVE)

kutire pi ksudre vraja-bhajana-yogye taru-tale

saci-sunos tirtha bhavatu nitaram me nivasatih

na canyatra ksetre vibudha-gana-sevye pulakito

vasami prasade vipula-dhana-rajyanvita iha

May I continuously reside in a small, lonely cottage at the base of a desire-tree in the most holy abode of Sri Navadvipa-dhama, which is sanctified by the lotus feet of Sri Saci-Nanadana. Such a bhajan-kutir is perfectly suitable for constant

remembrance of, and service to the divine daily sports that are always present in Sri Vraja-dhama. Indeed, in contrast to this, I will never live in any other place, even if it is bankered for with great enthusiasm by the most wise sages and demigods of all sorts. As far as all other places in this world are concerned, whether opulent palaces or temples, whether possessing vast riches of enormous wealth or princely kingdoms and property all such places cannot attract me as much as my modest bhajan-kutir in Sri Navadvipa-dhama does.

5th Verse

(THE REAL PRINCIPLE OF DHARMA WHICH IS DEVOID OF DESIGNATIONS)

na varne saktir me na khalu mamata hyasrama-vidhau

na dharme nadharme mama ratir ihaste kvacid api

param tat-tad-dharme mama jada-sariram dhrtam idam

ato dharman sarvan subhajana-sahayann abhilase

I have no attachment at all to any of those caste divisions of society such as brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya or sudra. And I certainly do not identify with any order of life such as brahmacarya, grhasta, vanaprasta, or sannyasa. I have no fondness or respect at all for the so-called piety of religiosity or even for the so-called impiety of sinful life in this world not even the slightest regard. Instead , I truly desire whatever is practically required just to maintain this material body in order to facilitate my performance of pure devotional service. This is the actual righteousness that I will hope for as long as this material body continues to exist.

6th Verse

(FAVORABLE, AUTHORIZED PRACTICES AND DEVOTIONAL QUALITIES)

sudainyam saralyam sakala-sahanam manada-danam

dayam svikrtya sri-hari-carana-seva mama tapah

sadacaro sau me prabhu-pada-parair yah samuditah

prabhos caitanyasyaksaya-carita-piyusa-krtisu

My austere vow is constant devotion to the lotus feet of Sri Hari. In order to execute that vow, I have accepted the following qualities by my own endeavor:

- I practice great humility in my dealings with everyone;
- I try to keep simplicity and purity prominent in all of my practical arrangements:
- I maintain extreme tolerance in all types of favorable or unfavorable circumstances:
- I offer all respect unto others, regardless of who they are:
- I feel genuine compassion for all living entities and act accordingly

There are many transcendental activities which are recommended by the great devotees who are fixed-up in unalloyed devotional service to the lotus feet of Sriman-Mahaprabhu, and these can be found described in the books that are full of the imperishable character and pastimes of Mahaprabhu Sri Krsna Caitanya. Only such transcendently nectarean activities, being recommended by great devotees and practiced by Lord Caitanya Himself, are indeed my own.

7th Verse

(REPULSION FROM THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE DISCONNECTED
FROM SRI RADHIKA)

na vaikunthe rajye na ca visaya-karye mam ratir

na nirvane mokse mama matir ihaste ksanam api

vrajanandam anyadd hari-vilasitam pavanam api

kathancin mam radhanvaya-virahitam no sukhayati

I have no attraction for living in Vaikuntha, that part of the spiritual sky presided

over by Sri Sri Laksmi- Narayana; nor do I desire useless activities of gross sense gratification in this material world. I will never cherish the desire for attaining the divine bliss of impersonalistic liberation, even for a second. Furthermore, there are many transcendental pastimes of Sri Hari that may be very purifying for all conditioned souls -- yet such pastimes will never ever give me any real happiness at all. This is because such pastimes are quite different from blissful ecstasies of Vraja-consciousness, being completely devoid of any relationship with Sri-Radhika, Who is the one and only fountainhead of pure joy.

8th Verse

(RENUNCIATION OF ALL KINDS OF BAD ASSOCIATION)

na me patni-kanya-tanaya-janani-bandhu-nicaya

harau bhakte bhaktau na khalu yadi tesam sumamata

abhaktanam-anna-grahanam api doso visayinam

katham tesam sangadd hari-bhajana-siddhir bhavati me

I now disown my wife my daughters, my sons, my mother, and all my friends,

If they have no genuine attachment for Lord Hari,

for His devotees,

or for His devotional service.

It is definitely a great sin even to accept foodgrains prepared by such non-devotional, materialistic sense-gratifiers. If I were to remain in the company of such persons, then how will the eternal perfection of my Hari-bajan ever come about?

9th Verse

(AVOIDANCE OF SO-CALLED 'DEVOEES' WHO PROUDLY NEGLECT SRI RADHIKA)

asat-tarkair-andhan jada-sukha-paran krsna-vimukhan

ku-nirvanasaktam satatam ati-dure pariharan

aradham govindam bhajati nitaram dambhikataya

tad-abhyase kintu ksanam api na yami vratam idam

There are certain persons who appear to very advanced in devotion. Indeed, to increase their service to the Lord, they have long since rejected the evil company of:

- those who are completely blinded by faulty arguments arising from so-called intellectual logic,
- those who are madly addicted to the fleeting pleasures of the dull material body,
- those who are averse to and envious of Lord Sri Krsna,
- and those who are very fond of the inferior, distasteful concept of liberation as it is cherished by the impersonalists.

They have thus favorably avoided all kinds of bad association; yet it is seen that such persons worship Lord Govinda without Srimati Radarani being present. This just shows that they are actually puffed-up with excessive pride and conceited arrogance directed against Sri Radika, who is Herself the best worshipper of Govinda. Therefore I will never ever go anywhere near such so-called devotees even for a second. This is my strict vow.

10th Verse

(HOW TO LIVE SIMPLY AND PERFOM VRAJA- BHAJANA UNTIL DEATH)

prasadanna-ksirasana-vasana -patradibhir aham

padarthair nirvahya vyavahrtim asangah ku visaye

vasam isa-ksetre yugala-bhajanandita-manas

tanum moksye kale yuga-pada-paranam pada-tale

Passing my life in a simple, practical way—

- eating only prasada foodgrains and milk products, the remnants of the Supreme, Lord, His mercy,
- wearing only prasad cloth that was offered to the Deity,
- using only the pots and utensils sanctified by the Lord's exclusive service,
- I will thus remain completely aloof from material sense-gratification.

Living by the side of Sri Radha-kunda (Her very own abode), worshiping the Divine Couple with a blissful mind, the time will come for my to die. At the soles of the devotees's lotus feet, who are themselves serving the lotus feet of the Divine Couple, I will thus give up my body.

11th Verse

(HOW TO WORSHIP THE LOTUS FEET OF SRI RADHIKA'S PURE DEVOTEE)

saci-sunor-ajna-grahana-caturyo yo vraja-vane

pararadhyam radham bhajati nitaram krsna-rasikam

aham tvetat-padamrtam anudinam naisthika-mana

vaheyam vai pitva sirasi ca muda sannati-yutah

There is a class of pure devotee who is completely expert and experienced in following all the instruction of Sri Saci-nandana. Such a devotee incessantly worships Srimati Radharani exclusively, Who is indeed the most worshipable

Personality, and who is deeply absorbed every day in relishing the Divine mellows of Sri Krsna's association. The pure devotee of this calibre definitely performs his confidential worship whole-heartedly and with exclusive surrender unto Sri Radhika. Thus he always lives in Sri Vraja-mandala. I shall take the nectarean water that has washed the lotus feet of such a devotee and carry it on my head. Drinking it with great joy, and with a devout heart, I will then happily offer my full prostration upon the ground in the nicest, most perfect way that I possibly can. This will indeed be my routine each and every day.

12th Verse

(FIRM DETERMINATION TO TRANSCEND MAYA BY DAILY FOLLOWING THIS STAVA)

harer dasyam dharmo mama tu cira-kalam prakrtito

maha-maya-yogad-abhinipatitah duhkha-jaladhu

ito yasyamy urddhvam sva-niyama-suratya prati-dinam

sahayo me matram vitatha-dalani vaisnava-krpa

As a spirit soul, my natural tendency is to be eternally situated in the loving devotional service of Lord Hari; however, due to the strong power and influence of the Lord's maha-maya, I have somehow plunged deeply into the fathomless ocean of material sorrow and grief. I shall transcend this world of maya and go to the spiritual world only by faithfully following these self imposed vows every day. And the only way I will get the strength to follow these vows is by attaining the mercy of all the Vaisnava devotees of the Lord. May their causeless mercy and softhearted compassion, which wards off all illusion, become my exclusive friend and guide for all of time everlasting.

13 Verse

(PHAL-SRUTI-THE BENEDICTION OF ETERNAL SERVICE GAINED BY READING THIS STAVA)

krtam kenapyetat sva-bhajana-vidhau svam niyamakam

parthed yo visraddhah priya-yugala-rupe 'rpita manah

vraje radha-krsnau bhajati kila samprapya nilayam

sva-manjaryah pascad vividha-varivasyam sa kurute

This stava named Sva-niyam Dvadasakam was written by someone to adjust and regulate his own personal mode of performing bhajan. If any other devotee happens to chant this stava with a very special quality of resolute faith, fully offering his mind unto:

- the supreme beautiful forms of the Divine Couple, Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, his most dear possession,
- or to the Divine beauty of Their Deity form,
- or to the beauty of Sri Gaura-Sundara, the combined form of Sri Sri Radha-Govinda,
- or to Srila Rupa Gosvami, the dearmost beloved devotee of Sri Sri Radha-Govinda and Sri Gaura-Sundara, then that fortunate reader definitely attains his own place of eternal residence in Sri Vraja-dhama. Always following behind his own manjari-guru, in his own spiritual body of a manjari, he finally renders all kinds of variegated eternal services for the exclusive worship of Sri Sri Radha-Krsna.

Thus ends " SVA-NIYAMA DVADASTAKAM"

by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, his last writing.